

FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers prepare for upcoming flood season

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SEATTLE — Flooding – whether from rain, snow melt off or storm surges – accounts for the greatest damage from natural disasters.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reminds the public they can prepare for a flood before it hits.

The National Weather Service says snow has already been accumulating in the lower mountains. So, it is not too early to start planning.

“Many people think they live too far from water to be in flood danger,” said Mark Carey, FEMA Mitigation Division director. “However, close to 30 percent of the nationwide claims come from properties located ‘outside’ a mapped floodplain. Flood maps are found at your local community office. Check with your local planning board or local building official to determine your flood risk.”

FEMA offers two key tips: 1) the first protection is flood insurance that averages less than \$600 a year in premiums, 2) be prepared to evacuate if authorities tell you to leave. Flood preparedness guides that include what to do during a flood and after a flood, making a family disaster plan, and a survival kit are available at www.ready.gov and www.floodsmart.gov.

Flood insurance can be purchased both inside and outside a mapped floodplain. Buy flood insurance now, FEMA officials said, since there is a 30-day waiting period before the policy is in effect.

In preparation for the upcoming flood season, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers met with local officials in area basins to inspect levees and discuss flood response plans.

“The Corps has a seasoned team of emergency responders that assist in floods and natural disasters,” said Paul Komoroske, chief of Emergency Management at the Corps’ office in downtown Seattle.

The Corps provides engineering services to respond to national and natural disasters to minimize damages and help in recovery efforts. Public Law 84-99 enables the Corps to assist state and local authorities in flood fight activities and cost share in the repair of flood protection structures.

For up-to-date river forecasts, go to www.nws.usace.army.mil and click on Rivers and Reservoirs.